

# The Light Sleeper

By W. E. Hill

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The daughter of a lightly sleeping mother who always knows best, about to tiptoe gently past the parent bedroom door at 4 a. m.



The second cup of coffee. O, how Mrs. Maebelle Leggins does wish she hadn't touched it. Not a wink of sleep has she had since her permanent touched the down pillow. She's been thinking and thinking, and wondering who her real friends are, and if Grace Gherkin meant it as a slight when she stayed away from the bridge party. And whether or not the old blue canton crepe can be dyed seal brown and whether she could give Mrs. Rouse the bag that Ethel sent her, if she has to give her a Christmas present, etc., etc.



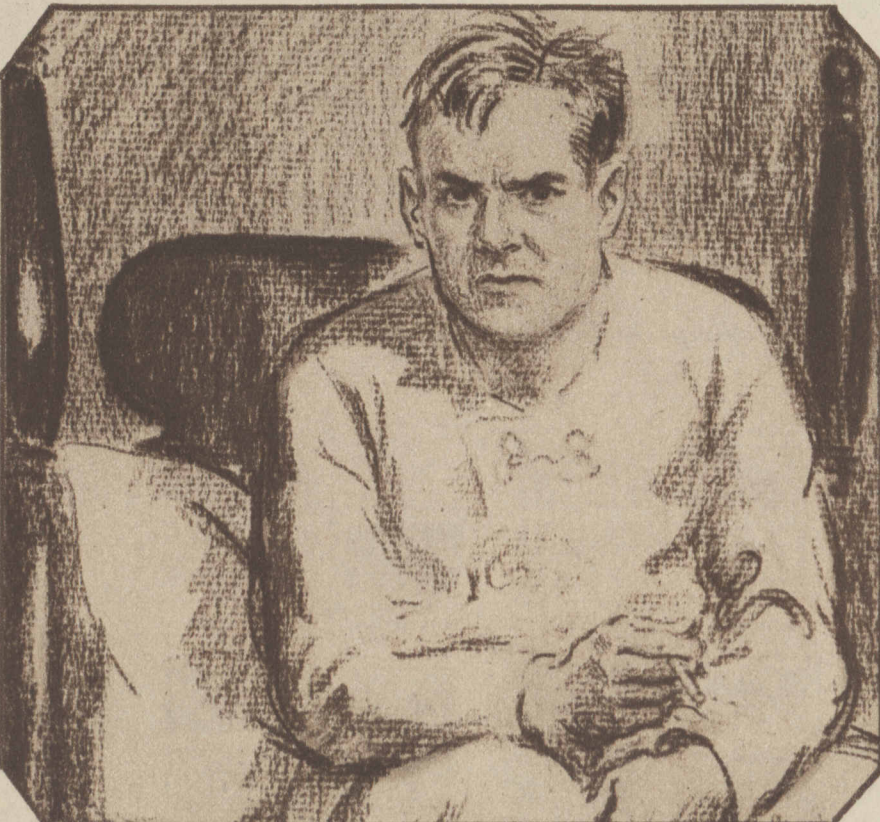
The night has a thousand eyes, and two of them belong to Aunt Josie Watts. Aunt Josie is one of those night prowlers who get a lot of exercise between midnight and dawn when gentle slumber evades them. Around 3 a. m. Aunt Josie decides to go peek in the icebox to see if Carrie the cook ate up all the tapioca pudding, or if Patsy the cat has been sequestered in the cellar as he should have been, or some such errand below stairs.



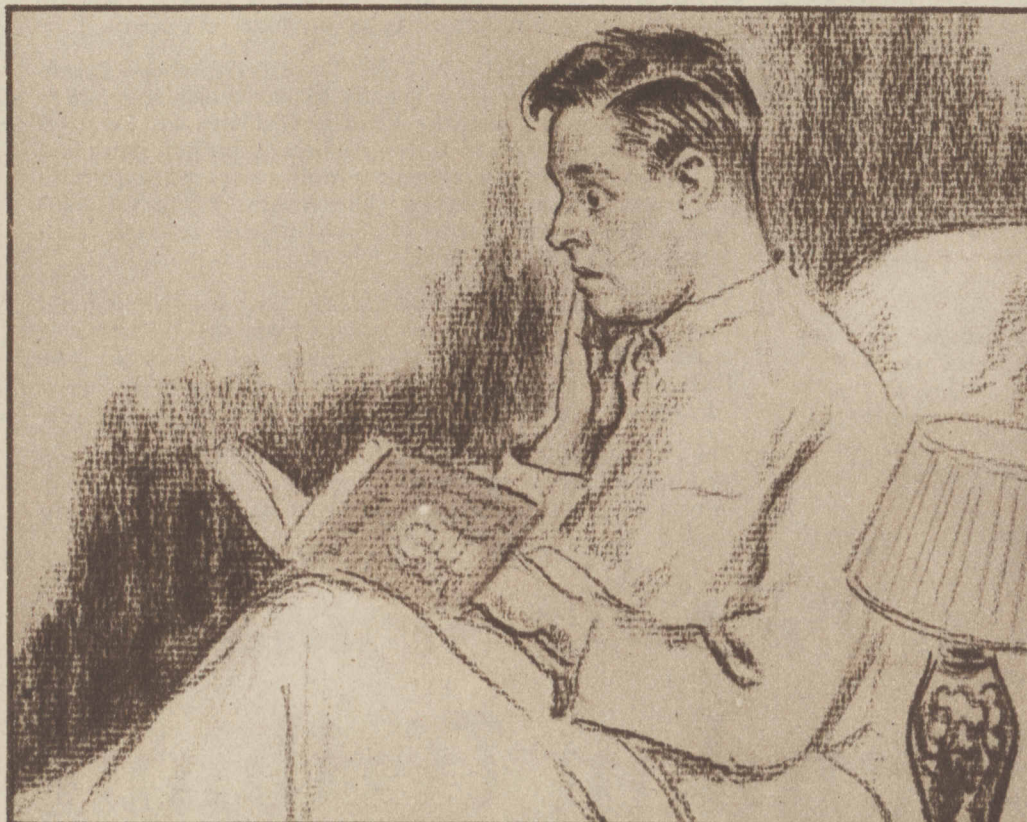
Mr. Kunkel is a light sleeper but a heavy eater and tonight, after a repast of larded sweetbreads, banana fritters en coccoo, onions frisee-sans-chemise, and blueberry dumplings soaked in benedictine, he is having the awfulest dreams, one of the choicest of which we show you. In it Mr. Kunkel finds himself clad lightly in underwear and a brown derby, right in the midst of a crowded ballroom.



"I think there are two women in the party, Mary, and one of them is named 'Cuddles.' O, dear, dear, I'm sure they are a party of gangsters planning a racket or a murder or something! Do you think we ought to change our room?" Elderly ladies of stationary habits, who "can't sleep in a strange bed," have no end of trouble getting their forty winks in a modern hotel.



Marcus is used to city ways and city noises, such as riveting, loud speakers, the grinding of brakes, motor tooting, and the guttural shouts of racketeers murdering a rum runner. No wonder then, that, in the country where there is nothing but silence after 9 p. m., he is wide awake listening for something in the way of noise.



Never place a brand new mystery yarn in the same room with a light sleeper, hoping that a little reading will put him to sleep. Because he won't be able to put the book aside till he finishes the last page and finds out who it was who dismembered Lady Patricia Castaway's beautifully groomed body, and stuffed it in Lord Dennis Doo-little's ash can. And there will be another late breakfast to worry the cook.



The man who boarded an outgoing 12:30 sleeper in the train yard at 9:30 so he could have a good night's rest. By 10:30 he wishes he had a good detective story, the kind that begins: "The worst London fog in 200 years enveloped Scotland Yard. 'Poofph, poofph,' whistled a bullet through the air, leaving a pool of blood and a mangled corpse on the pavement."